

Message

From: Szelag, Matthew [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=F1E48230D96943F8ACB72810E32CE8D6-SZELAG, MATTHEW]
Sent: 1/12/2015 6:29:49 PM
To: cnie461@ecy.wa.gov [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=084bdcc64365427fa3795d176eb53d94-cnie461@ecy.wa.gov]
Subject: Re: ECOLOGY NEWS: Fish consumption rule proposed for Washington state

Thanks!

From: Niemi, Cheryl (ECY) <cnie461@ECY.WA.GOV>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2015 10:05 AM
To: Szelag, Matthew
Subject: FW: ECOLOGY NEWS: Fish consumption rule proposed for Washington state

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Fish consumption rule proposed for Washington state

Tied to governor's proposed legislation to reduce toxics

OLYMPIA – [Proposed water quality standards for toxics](#) announced today lay the groundwork to better protect Washington's people, waters, and economy.

The proposed update is tied to toxics-reduction [legislation](#) Gov. Inslee is proposing to address toxics that enter the environment from unregulated everyday sources, such as consumer products.

“Together, the rule and toxics reduction proposal will address larger pollution challenges than the federal Clean Water Act can solve,” said Gov. Jay Inslee. “If we truly want cleaner water that reduces health risks for our communities, this is the approach we need to take.”

The proposed standards for toxics, formally called the human health criteria, say our waters need to be clean enough for people to eat the fish that swim in the waters. The standards are important because they drive pollution discharge limits for industries and other entities that discharge pollution. They are required by the federal Clean Water Act.

The proposed changes are in line with Gov. Inslee's July 9, 2014, policy directive that says updated water quality standards should protect people and the environment and not overburden local governments or industry.

The formal draft rule to update the water quality standards for toxics mirrors the preliminary draft that Ecology made public on Sept. 30, 2014.

In a parallel process, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) started its own rule-making process in December 2014 to update Washington's standards should the state's process stall.

"We believe Washington state is in the best position to choose water quality standards that reflect our environmental and economic priorities," said Ecology Director Maia Bellon. "Our proposal makes significant improvements in protecting Washington residents, but also sets achievable targets for industry and local governments."

The final adoption of the standards depends on the legislative outcome of Gov. Inslee's toxics reduction proposal.

Governor's toxics reduction initiative

Much of the pollution that enters our environment comes from the small-but-steady releases of toxic chemicals contained in everyday products such as brakes on our cars, flame retardants in furniture, softeners in plastics, and metals in roofing materials. Meanwhile, pollution and water quality regulations focus mainly on the end-of-pipe disposal of spent toxic chemicals from industrial manufacturers and wastewater dischargers.

The toxics reduction initiative will give Washington a framework to deal with the most problematic chemicals and find safer alternatives when possible. This approach builds on Washington's well-established system for developing chemical action plans, and will bring together stakeholders to recommend actions to reduce or eliminate use of priority toxic chemicals.

Gov. Inslee's proposed budget includes funding for the initiative to strengthen existing programs to prevent releases of toxics, reduce the impacts of toxics in the environment, and develop safer chemicals for use in products.

"Our regulations today often try to fix our pollution problems at the end of a wastewater discharge pipe," said Carol Kraege, Ecology's toxics coordinator. "Reducing the use of toxic chemicals on the front end, when products are created, is more effective, cheaper and reduces the burden on water dischargers."

Highlights of the updated standards

The state's updated water quality standards would ensure that no standard, except naturally occurring arsenic, becomes less protective. Seventy percent of the new standards would be more protective. Most would be from two to 20 times more protective. The remaining 30 percent of the standards would maintain the current protective standards and would not backslide. Because arsenic occurs naturally at high levels in Washington, Ecology proposes the updated arsenic standard align with the federal drinking water standard.

Ecology's cost-benefit analysis on the updated water quality standards indicates the new standards would create minimal costs to water dischargers. Although there would be approximately 55 new polluted water listings

under the proposed standards, the new water pollution listings would not immediately result in new requirements for any existing water discharger.

Public hearings

Ecology will hold public hearings about the proposed water quality standards on March 3 in Spokane, March 4 in Yakima, and March 12 in Lacey. Online participation is possible during the March 12 public hearings.

Submit comments about the proposed water quality standards in writing by midnight March 23, 2015.

- Mail: Cheryl Niemi, Washington Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia WA 98504-7600
- Email: swqs@ecy.wa.gov

Find details about the proposed rule and the public hearings on Ecology's rule-making [website](#). Ecology will also provide additional information about the public hearings in the coming weeks through email announcements. ([Subscribe](#) to receive email announcements.)

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